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ABSTRACT

This guide is a selected list of 25 software packages and 15 books about educational computing. It is the first step in guiding librarians, teachers, tutors, and other literacy providers to choose the best and most appropriate software for use by their students and staff. Software is divided by these topics: problem-solving software, tool programs or multiuse programs to help solve real problems (word processing programs and filing/data base programs), and reading/language arts programs (drill and practice or tutorial programs in the areas of communication arts). For each software package this information is provided: title, source and address, cost, and a brief annotation. Two lists of suggested instructional computing books are provided: general books about computers and education and books on LOGO programming. (YLB)

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BOOTING UP:

A Computer-Assisted Bibliography

An Annotated List of Educational Computer Software
for Youth and Adult Literacy Programs

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About the Literacy Assistance Center

The Literacy Assistance Center, Inc. (LAC), is an independent not-for-profit organization whose mission is to promote the expansion of effective literacy instruction in New York City. The LAC does not operate classes or tutoring programs. Rather, its primary focus is to support the institutions, public and private, which provide literacy services -- the Board of Education, the City University of New York, the public libraries, and community-based organizations -- and strengthen the links among them. Its activities are designed to meet the needs of teachers and teachers' assistants, librarians, tutors, community workers, administrators, policy-makers, funders, private industry representatives, and others interested in literacy.

The LAC was incorporated in March, 1983, as a result of recommendations made in the report, Literacy and New York City's High School Aged Youth, by the Literacy Task Force of the Mayor's Office of Youth Services and the High School Division of the Board of Education. Since that time, the LAC has been active as a source of information and assistance for the greater New York literacy community. The LAC draws on the input and expertise of practitioners in providing services both to programs and to the field. These services enable us to recognize and contribute to the on-going development of a unified professional community of diverse literacy providers.

Booting Up is a selected list of software and books about educational computing. It is the first step in guiding librarians, teachers, tutors, and other literacy providers to choose the best and most appropriate software for use by their students and staff. Prepared and annotated by Maryann Marrapodi for the Literacy Assistance Center, it cites a small number of the kinds of software requested by the Brooklyn, New York and Queens borough Public Libraries' literacy programs. We think it will also be useful for literacy classes and other instructional programs, as well.

The selections represent a range of educational software: variety of skill, publisher and cost were all considered, as was the appropriateness of the software for adult learners.

A good rule to follow as you decide on your own selections is: Never purchase any software sight unseen, if you can possibly avoid it. Any software you consider should be examined closely, preferably by the people who will use it. Publishers will often supply 30-day examination copies, and it is a good idea to request them. Conferences and workshops about educational computing often offer hands-on sessions, which can provide the opportunity to examine several software programs. After you've examined a software program, use this (and other lists) and your own experience to judge whether it will be useful to you.

We hope the users of this list will suggest new programs to update it, or remind us of those we've omitted. This is, after all, a guide for practitioners; with your input, it will be as effective a guide as possible.

Ellen Lippmann
Clearinghouse Coordinator
December, 1984

prosoft

I. PROBLEM SOLVING SOFTWARE:

Problem solving software is not easily defined as part of any specific curriculum area. Rather, it works with logic, reasoning, and inferential thinking skills to cut across and enhance all areas.

The Incredible Laboratory

Sunburst Communications
Pleasantville, New York
$50

Without realizing it, users of this program apply the scientific method. As the users experiment and discover the effects of "chemicals" on their imaginary creatures, they are really formulating and testing hypotheses. Adults love it.

Moptown

The Learning Company
Portola Valley, California
$40

Each of the Moptown programs helps develop logic, pattern recognition, and strategies for general problem solving. The cartoon graphics are amusing, rather than condescending. I can't think of another program that received such high ratings from every review. All ages love this series of programs.

Plato's Cave

Krell Software
Stony Brook, New York
$50

Plato's Cave is a logic game that encourages the problem solving heuristic of making a model. In this game, the users try to discover the reality of Plato's Cave by finding the location and the type of objects hidden within it. From this, they can deduce the outline of the cave and draw a map. Third graders found the easy levels fun, while high school kids found the harder levels very challenging. So did I.

Rocky's Boots

The Learning Company
Portola Valley, California
$50

This is an extraordinary program. Users try to build a "logic machine" by deciding on the sequence and the parts of a machine to use. They can then manipulate various objects through the machine and look at the results. A special HELP feature lets users get directions any time they are needed.

Snooper Troops

Spinnaker Software
Cambridge, Massachusetts
$45

This game is so much fun, that the learnings sneak up on you. Users practice note-taking, organizing information, reasoning, and applying known facts to an unknown situation. This is a captivating and exciting program for all ages. The graphics enhance it.

II. TOOL PROGRAMS:

Tool programs are multi-use programs used to help solve real problems, such as saving, retrieving information, writing, and forecasting ("what if"). These programs reflect the true power of computers and permit the user total control of the computer.

WORD PROCESSING PROGRAMS

Bank Street Writer

Scholastic, Inc.
New York, New York
$75 - 95

The Bank Street Writer is easy enough for second graders and powerful enough for adults to use it for letters and short documents. Bank Street is in many area schools and teachers like using it. This is critical, because there is never any question that kids will like it. Supportive print materials are available.

Cut and Paste

Electronic Arts
San Mateo, California
$50

This word processing program is easy to use and sophisticated enough that users will not "outgrow" it. Commands are visible on the screen at all times, so there is no need to remember a host of mysterious ESC or CTRL-B keystrokes. Most importantly, the documentation is clear and easy to understand. I have used this program very successfully with upper elementary school kids.

Magic Slate

Sunburst Communications
Pleasantville, New York
$65

This word processing program was designed by actual classroom teachers for their students. It is used in grade schools, high schools, and BOCES centers. Magic Slate is powerful. The more sophisticated features are available as students (and teachers) need them. Really solid.

FILING/DATA BASE PROGRAMS

Phi Beta Filer

Scarborough Systems, Inc.
Tarrytown, New York
$50

This database program is designed for kids, but is widely used by adults. This demonstrates the ease and power of the program. I have used this with elementary and junior high students. They can create, manipulate, and print lists of information as simple as names and addresses, and as complex as cross-referenced notes. This truly puts the powers of computing in the hands of students.

III. READING/LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAMS

The following are either drill and practice or tutorial programs in the areas of communication arts. Careful examination of these is necessary to be sure that the instructional approach is appropriate for the instructional philosophy.

The Chambers of Vocabulary

Reader's Digest
Pleasantville, New York
$40

White Plains uses this as a remedial activity for secondary students. Several hundred words, at three levels of difficulty, are drilled in a maze-game format. Teachers can add or change words at will. The maze format is very engaging for teenagers.

Classified Ads and Telephone Directories

Encyclopedia Britannica
Chicago, Illinois
$60

This program goes far beyond the typical "survival reading" worksheet. It's practical, easy to use, provides immediate reinforcement, and gives some clues.

Cloze-Plus

Milliken Publishing
St. Louis, Missouri
$425

This program covers reading levels from the third to the eighth grade on 12 disks. This is better than paper and pencil cloze materials because it not only provides immediate feedback, it also displays clues upon the user's request. These clues guide the user to the appropriate part of the story to find the answer.

Crossword Magic

L & S Computerware
Sunnyvale, California
$50

This is more of a tool program than a drill and practice program. The teacher (or student) enters a series of words and related clues. The program will then use these to print out a crossword puzzle for reviewing vocabulary. Very handy.

Crypto Cube

Design Ware, Inc.
$40

Crypto Cube lets students drill vocabulary and/or spelling words through a veriety of puzzle formats. Perhaps the nicest feature in this program is that teachers and students can enter their own words to be used in the puzzles. The directions for these programs are much easier than similar programs.

Job Applications and Paychecks

Encyclopedia Britannica
Chicago, Illinois
$70

More survival reading skills, but this one also includes animated sequences to show how to fill out job applications. The paycheck section finally clarified the difference between gross and net for me.

M-ss-ng L-nks

Sunburst Communications
Pleasantville, New York
$49

Although this may resemble an electronic version of Hangman, the program goes much further. It has users decode incomplete words in the context of sentences and paragraphs from actual literature. The difficulty level varies, and the correct answer is supplied after the user tries as many times as he/she has indicated. Most people rave about this software. The "gamey" format helps it seem very non-threatening.

Money Matters

Media Materials, Inc.
Baltimore, Maryland

Designed for use with adults, this provides practice in reading, interpreting, and filling out forms such as bills, checks, utility statements, and other common forms. Valuable program.

Myths? Monsters? Mysteries?	Encyclopedia Brittanica Chicago, Illinois $279

The 6 disks contain a variety of hi/lo stories to provide reading practice and comprehension review for reluctant readers. Adults like the stories and find the program comfortable to use.

Our Weird and Wacky World: Literal	Educational Activities Freeport, New York $85

While some of the graphics may be questionable for adults, this is a very engaging program. Using funny, but true stories, the users are provided with a series of interesting activities to reinforce literal comprehension. I've used this with Spanish-dominant adults -- they loved it.

Reading Comprehension	Milton Bradley East Longmeadow, Massachusetts $50

Although students must read above the fifth grade level to use this program, it is really solid. The topics include finding the topic sentence, supporting details, summarizing the main idea, and choosing the correct title. The pace is good, the graphics are appropriate, and the disks include both tutorial and practice activities.

Reading Comprehension Series	Random House New York, NY $162 each

Each of the five modules is self contained and can be purchased separately. The five modules are: What's Different, Following Directions, Reference Skills, Reading to Know, and Reading for Meaning. Designed for students on the first to sixth grade levels, these modules provide a brief tutorial segment, which includes appropriate branching, practice, a review, and criterion-referenced pre and post tests. They are effective.

Roots/Affixes	Hartley Courseware, Inc. Diamondale, Michigan $40 This spans reading levels from the third to fifth grade. While drilling roots and affixes, the program also allows the teacher to modify the lesson format and to add words. Pacing is very comfortable.
Sentence Combining	Milliken Publishing, Inc. St. Louis, MO $95 While the reading level is controlled to the 4th - 6th grade level, the material is appropriate for students working with junior high level skills. Both instruction and practice are provided in this package. Teachers and students like the program, and both feel it has a positive impact on writing.
Tutorial Comprehension	Random House New York, New York $995 (Strands can be brought separately at $225 each) Tutorial Comprehension is unique in that the 20 disks encompass a variety of approaches, so that no learner is left out because the instructional approach does not match his/her learning style. This program is composed of four major strands: Main Idea, Inference, Critical Reading, and Sequencing. The approach is familiar: a brief tutorial, practice for each skill, and a game that applies that skill. Skills range from first to sixth grade levels. This program used in many literacy and BOCES programs for adults.
What Was That Word?	Edutek Palo Alto, California $25 This program uses the computer as a tachistoscope to provide practice in recognizing words. the teacher and/or student provides the words used in the program. This can be really effective in class setting or when used for independent practice.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL COMPUTING BOOKS

I. General Books about Computers and Education

Coburn, Kelman, et al. — Practical Guide to Computers in Education
Addison Wesley Publishing Co.
Reading, MA 1982

Doerr, C. — Microcomputers and the 3 R's
Hayden Book Company
Rochelle Park, NJ 1979

Grady and Gawronski (ed) — Computers in Curriculum and Instruction
ASCD Publications
Alexandria, VA 1985

Luehrmann and Peckham — Computer Literacy: A Hands-On Approach
McGraw-Hill
New York, NY 1984

Markle, S. — Kids' Computer Capers
Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books
New York, NY 1983

Papert, S. — Mindstorms
Basic Books
New York, NY

Radin, Lee, Marrapodi — Computers in the Classroom
SRA
Chicago, IL 1985

Richman, E. — Spotlight on Computer Literacy
Random House
New York, NY 1982

Taylor, R. — The Computer in the School: Tutor, Tool, Tutee
Teachers College Press
New York, NY 1980

II. LOGO Programming

Abelson, H. — Logo For the Apple
BYTE Books
Peterborough, NH 1982

Beardon, C. — 1-2-3 My Computer and Me
Reston Publishing Co.
Reston, VA 1983

Marrapodi, M. — Spotlight on Logo for the Apple
Random House
New York, NY 1985

Thornburg, D. — Discovering Apple Logo
Addison Wesley
Reading, MA 1983

Tipps, Riordan, Bull — Nudges: Logo Projects
Holt, Rinehart and Winston
New York, NY 1984

Watt, D. — Learning With Logo
Byte Books/McGraw-Hill
New York, NY 1983